products have to obtain necessary permission for undertaking clinical trial from the office of Drugs Controller General of India as per norms stipulated under Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Rules framed thereunder.

Approval of Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) is required for safe release of genetically engineered drugs into environment, as per the rules framed under the EP Act, 1986 issued by Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Not taking simultaneous approval from GEAC by M/s Shantha Biotech Pvt. Ltd. Hyderabad and Biocon India Ltd. Bangalore, for their indigenously developed r-Streptokinase Inj. and r-human insulin respectively, at the stage of clinical trial, have been considered as a procedural lapse and therefore *ex-post-facto* GEAC approval has been accorded for conducting phase-III clinical trial.

Easy and cheap supply of life saving drugs

531. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that life saving drugs have become inaccessible and unaffordable for common people;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering of making those life saving drugs more accessible and available; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (c) The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) monitors the availability and shortages of drugs and medicines based on the feedback received from State Drugs Controllers, NGOs and public complaints etc. The NPPA has not received any specific complaint/report regarding continuous non-availability of any specific medicines in the recent past.

In general the prices of medicines have not gone up unreasonably. It may also be noted that the percentage change in whole sale price index (WPI) for Drugs and Medicines is less as compared to that for all commodities during the past 4 years, as given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

Percentage change in WPI for drugs and medicines as compared to all commodities

	% change in WPI over preceding year (Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry)			
Year	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Particulars				
Drugs & Medicines	5.85	3.48	0.71	2.55
All Commodities	7.16	3.60	3.41	5.46

World Bank Report on Maternal Mortality Rate and AIDS

532. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reviewed a recent study of the World Bank on social progress and outlook highlighting *inter-alia* despite increase in public health expenditure the maternal mortality has worsened, going up from 424 per 1,00,000 in 1990s to 540 per 1,00,000 in 2000 and HIV infected has risen from 3.5 million in 1990s to 4 million in 2000;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) whether any fresh steps have been taken to upgrade the health facilities available to common citizens and strategy drawn up to effectively contain HIV virus already threatening large parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) The National Family Health Survey-I (NFHS-I), 1991-92 estimated the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) for India at 424 per 1,00,000 live births. The National Family Health Survey-II in 1997-98 estimated the MMR as 540 per 1,00,000 live births. The World Bank Group in their publication 'Country Strategy for India-September, 2004' have mentioned that based on the existing data, the Maternal Mortality Rate has worsened. They have, however, qualified this statement to the effect that there are problems with the data for this